

**Columbus Bar Association Family Law Committee Meeting  
February 12, 2007**

**Minutes**

Chairman Chip Snedaker called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. by welcoming participants. Mr. Snedaker opened the floor for participants to discuss any notable experiences with the new line-up of judges on the Domestic Court. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Snedaker then opened the meeting by recognizing subcommittee chairpersons for reports. Attorney Chuck Preston reported for the Judicial subcommittee chairman Bradley Frick giving the committee participants a summary of the recent meeting with the Domestic Court judges by providing a list of initiatives the judges are implementing and issues that the judges are facing. Mr. Preston reported that Judge Geer and others are using summary trials in chambers with the consent of the parties. He reported that Judge Browne stated the court is being overwhelmed with cases from other counties and asked domestic court practitioners to refrain from filing cases from other counties. The judges attending also reported concerns that there has been an increase in emergency custody motions filed with the court and that the court is attempting to address the problem. Mr. Preston also reported the new mediation rules are posted on the court's web-site and that the court is automatically setting pretrial dates, so if a lawyer or a party needs a continuance they must notify the court as soon as they become aware of the need for the continuance or risk having the motion to continue denied. The court is also considering new rules for Rule 75 hearings and publishing new withholding form. Mr. Preston finally reported the some judges are chairing four-way settlement conferences; that Judge Gill is proposing issuing case management orders at the pretrial stage; and that Magistrate Hosafros is out on leave until April.

Attorney Lee Ann Massucci gave a brief Pro Bono subcommittee report stating that the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation presented options for formalizing all domestic court forms to the court and that the judges were excited about the project.

Mr. Snedaker then introduced the meetings guest speaker Retired Judge Thomas Loudan. Judge Loudan addressed the committee participants on the issues of one spouse being represented and assuring no fraud, duress or undue influence in the dissolution proceeding and on the topic of the convenience, advantages, and disadvantages of using a private judge. Judge Loudan also discussed the procedures and forms for using a private judge and the types of cases where a private judge can be used. Judge Loudan then led committee participants in a general discussion touching on the other issues related to the use of a private judge in family law cases.

Mr. Snedaker adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.